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PLAY

O MX

Heady stuff...

Motocross can send you flying one moment and put you on the ground the next. Honda rider Max Anstie spectacularly shows the sport's propensity to punish even the slightest mistake. Across the slippery Loket circuit in the Czech Republic last weekend the Grand Prix stars encountered one of their fastest and slickest tests of the season. Read on for the report and click the links for videos and OTOR's brand new MXGP podcast

Photo by Ray Archer



PLAY



California dreaming...

...except Laguna Seca was more of a nightmare for those hoping to stop Casey Stoner from becoming the most successful Grand Prix rider at the Monterrey venue. The champion repeated his victory of 2011 and pushed Jorge Lorenzo into the role of another 'meat in the Honda sandwich'. MotoGP keeps stateside this month with Indianapolis up next – another Stoner territory

Photo by Honda Pro images/Northcott



MotoGP



PLAY



AMA-MX

More America...

OTOR grabbed some valuable time and thoughts from MX Sports supremo Davey Coombs on the state and issues surrounding the series. As in Europe the silly season is still in full swing and until Ryan Villopoto and Dean Wilson (pictured) confirm their saddles for 2013 then the rest of the puzzle cannot click into place

Photo by Steve Cox





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MX

GRAND PRIX OF CZECH REPUBLIC

LOKET · AUGUST 5th · Rnd 12 of 16

MX1 winner: Tony Cairoli, KTM

MX2 Winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM


LOK-OUT

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer www.rayarcher.com



PLAY





A fifth 1-1 scorecard for Cairoli in 2012 showed that the work done by KTM to evolve the 350SX-F has paid off and the Sicilian is riding better than ever. 222 has been unbeatable too many times this season

At the midway point of raceday at Loket it seemed as though the demanding character of the circuit would be as much a talking point as the results. Finally a dry weekend for the FIM Motocross World Championship and the Czech soil was slippery, stingy with traction and the fast and sweeping layout obliged the riders to be virtually on top of their prey in order to make a pass. With Red Bull KTM's Tony Cairoli heading a static first MX1 moto from CP377 Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Christophe Pourcel, and Jeffrey Herlings offering a similar outcome in MX2 from Tommy Searle the 35 minute and 2 lap races felt long indeed.

After the lunch break the well-attended Grand Prix exploded.

MX1 turned into a four-way dogfight for the majority of the distance. Cairoli and Pourcel mindful of the delicate throttle precision needed at Loket still seemed to enjoy the challenge in resisting Rockstar Energy Suzuki's Clement Desalle and Cairoli's returning team-mate Max Nagl; the German making an emphatic first GP appearance after a long back problem. The World Champion held fourth for vast stretches but when he decided to 'go', Pourcel, Nagl and Desalle in that order did not have much to offer.

'222's seventh victory from twelve in 2012 was also his fifth double and, quite memorably, represented his 50th career success, planting the Sicilian as the third winningest rider in the history of the sport. Only three rounds ago a double DNF had seen Cairoli surrendering the red plate to Desalle. Three wins on the spin means he has rebuilt a 30 point cushion in his bid to win a fourth consecutive crown in the premier class.

Over in MX2 Herlings' KTM team-mate Jeremy Van Horebeek set an early pace after the disappointment of his mechanical DNF in the first moto. The Belgian had been close to hunting Searle in the standings and this was a setback. Behind him Herlings and Searle renewed their intense and cold spat for the championship.

A move by the Brit that hit the Dutchman to the floor could have seen him fall foul of the FIM's pledge to zero tolerance towards on-track misbehaviour but instead it ignited a fury in Herlings that saw him charge back to overtake both his nemesis and Van Horebeek to go 1-1.

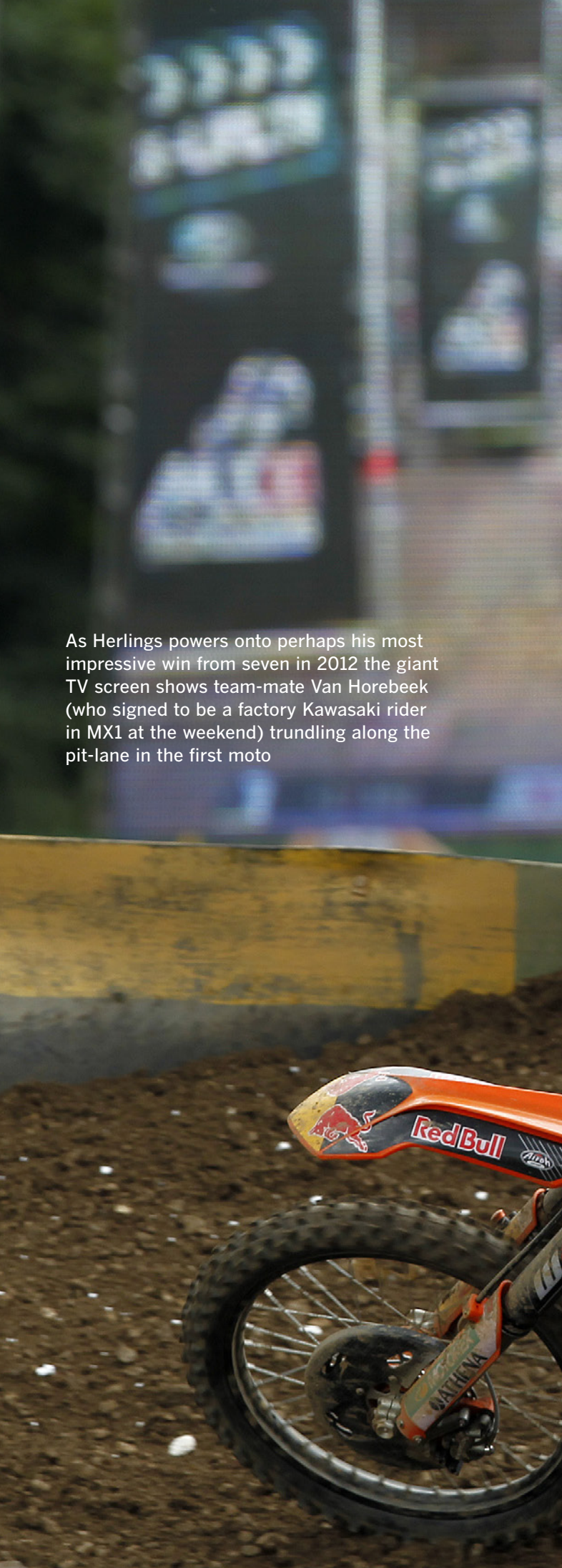
It was wonderfully gripping and nervous stuff both in Searle's initial stalk of the rider that he simply has to beat to think about the title and Herlings' path of revenge that ended with a purposeful 'extended' blockpass, forcing Searle very wide off the racing line.

Searle admitted he was not at his best and had no reply to the teenager who has now claimed fourteen chequered flags to his seven while Herlings' claims of a broken rib, a problem with his shoulder blade and the need for constant painkillers in order to race (all consequences of being a back seat passenger in a car crash after the Grand Prix of Russia two weeks previously) seemed almost unbelievable such was his speed and form. Neither shook hands on the podium afterwards. A group of Dutch fans booed Searle but the Brit knew his foe would be in for a tough reception at the British Grand Prix in two weeks (with the Dutch GP following).

"Jeffrey was making a few mistakes in front of me and I was behind him for a few laps," said Searle. "I could have made a worse pass than what I did a few times but I backed off. I was getting hit by so much roost that I knew I needed to do something. I ran it in pretty hot on the inside - I don't think it was too bad - and he went down. I hit a wall after that. I made a mess of my lines and it is not like me."

"There were five or six places he could have passed me but why there?" reflected Herlings in the press conference. "He cleaned me out and it's a shame that's what he needed to do to win. I respect him a lot as a rider and a person but that was a shame. After that I wanted to win so bad that I would have snapped my handlebars."

Searle: "Obviously he was going to come back at me because I put him down. I expected it. Basically I couldn't run the same pace."



As Herlings powers onto perhaps his most impressive win from seven in 2012 the giant TV screen shows team-mate Van Horebeek (who signed to be a factory Kawasaki rider in MX1 at the weekend) trundling along the pit-lane in the first moto





Desalle chases Nagl while Cairoli looks for a way past Pourcel. This looping section sums up most of the challenges of Loket quite nicely

Herlings: "I looked over at him and thought 'damn, why did you need to do that?' Now I have double the moto wins and I've proven I'm the better rider. Today with was a mental thing."

Searle: "I expected he would have some fans here and that reaction [the booing] but I'm really looking forward to my home GP."

Herlings: "I am so motivated to win in England. I hope the fans do not do anything silly like throw something. I want to win that one so bad."

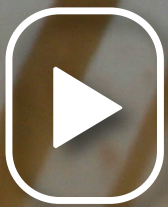
Searle: "Like I've said before there is a big points gap but..shit happens. I've had two DNFs and now he's pulled a pretty big gap and he's ridden well. It is a long shot now but anything can still happen."

With a 57 point advantage and four GPs to go Herlings will need to be cursed by fate (like Josh Coppins was at Loket in 2007 when he crashed and broke his shoulder while leading MX1 by over 100 points with four rounds remaining) or have to do something very silly for Searle to get another look-in. Nothing is over yet but the series is becoming more and more watchable.



was brilliant, but didn't take much of a challenge as Searle ended a different type of race. By accounts the Dutchman was escape a big crash on the way with nothing more than a head and concussion

Searle pushes hard to recover from another mediocre start in the first moto. This climb past the pit-lane saw some fantastic drag-racing action



PLAY

Both Searle and Herlings hardly played their part in calming home crowd hysteria for the next two Grands Prix...as tough as the rivalry has been in 2012 it has been immensely entertaining.





Pourcel was back in the groove at Loket. He could do little about Cairoli but his overtaking move on Desalle through the tight hairpin at the bottom of the steepest and fastest step-down was absolute mastery and worth the admission alone





Desalle trails Cairoli by only 30 points but on the track the gulf is wider. The Belgian needs some luck and a potent reserve of performance if he wants to shoplift the '12 MX1 title





Max Nagl (below) prepped his gate for the first time in 2012 and promptly showed the danger of prematurely writing-off the 24 year old German

So close to a maiden overall podium for Jake Nicholls who broke his top three duck in the first moto. The Brit is now up to fifth in the MX2 standings and has to be a considered a contender for a mass trophy haul in 2013





Four out of four for Mel Pocock (119) in EMX2. A Grand Prix ride beckons

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MX1 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
2	Christophe Pourcel, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Clement Desalle, BEL	Suzuki
4	Max Nagl, GER	KTM
5	Xavier Boog, FRA	Kawasaki

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Tommy Searle, GBR	Kawasaki
3	Zach Osborne, USA	Yamaha
4	Jake Nicholls, GBR	KTM
5	Romain Febvre, FRA	KTM

MX1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 12 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	492
2 Clement Desalle	462
3 Christophe Pourcel	435
4 Gautier Paulin	402
5 Ken De Dycker	368

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 12 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	578
2 Tommy Searle	471
3 Jeremy Van Horebeek	439
4 Joel Roelants	367
5 Jake Nicholls	325

Sweet stuff for Zach Osborne who faces just four more Grands Prix before a return to AMA competition. A first podium came courtesy of a 4-4 run and the American is a decent bet for more silverware before he departs MX2





MX NEWS

WIN FOUR BRITISH GRAND PRIX PASSES

Like most high profile annual sporting events Grands Prix aren't always easy on the wallet – even if motocross still represents some of the best value for money in terms of the action and entertainment that can be found – but OTO has four more passes for the MXGP Festival (aka British Grand Prix) at Matterley Basin on August 18-19 to give away. We'll make a draw from our pool of Facebook likes on

Friday 10th and will contact the winner directly. So if you haven't already done so then click on the link below to give us a 'like' and be in with a chance of taking friends or family to Winchester.





OTOR GOES AURAL WITH MXGP PODCAST

The PulpMX.com show in the United States – although run by a proud Canadian – has set the benchmark for motocross/supercross podcasting with a glut of first class guests (is there anyone Steve Matthes hasn't interviewed behind the mic or over the phone?) and a chatty, informal tone that really breaks down the barriers between the stars and the fans. Motocross is pretty accessible by virtue of its earthliness but there is little doubt that the PulpMX outlet has provided good PR opps for the likes of Stewart, Barcia etc. Untoward racers with a bad rep have been able to put their side of the story across. It has made for some essential listening. Motocross Grand Prix racing – although served excellently by video productions in the last few years – has been missing a similar provision.

In light of this observation OTOR will endeavour to bring you a range of interviews and post-GP opinion direct from the circuits for the remaining five races of the year and maybe one or two specials through the winter. To hear our inaugural attempt from the Grand Prix of Czech Republic including interviews with Tommy Searle, Tony Cairoli and analysis of the motos in MX1 and MX2 from commentator Paul Malin click through to www.ontrackoffroad.com and direct to the podcast by clicking [here](#).



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19TH AUGUST WEEKEND
GRAND PRIX OF GREAT BRITAIN



SOAPBOX STRATEGIES

By Adam Wheeler



Youthstream have been chatting about the need to bring the FIM Motocross World Championship out of Europe all season and the entirely plausible idea to give the series more global scope will force many to consider the way the sport is run and the make-up of the Grand Prix paddock.

It is clear that a discipline that has for so long held a strong European base through its teams and riders, partners and sponsors now has to take a punt into the unknown. Youthstream tried to push Japanese manufacturers to consider Grand Prix on a worldwide scale a number of years ago but while the brands might happily congratulate themselves on a title or success from MX, the FIM World Championship was/is considered a European pursuit therefore drawn from European budgets and subsidiaries (where sales are tumbling). The focus on North America received bigger interest and investment but it's obvious that the USA is/was a bigger market and a series like AMA Supercross reaches the kind of live audiences to rival MotoGP

The abolishment of prize money was the final straw that dragged Grand Prix motocross into the twenty first century and from a sport where the have-a-go-hero could prosper. Now MXGP is run very much like any other international series scrapping for minutes on TV in terms of coverage and battling a mainstream of sporting activity through the evolving mediums of press. Events funded by local or central governments (the chief reason why European Grands Prix are becoming more difficult to stage), sponsors having even more say in riding personnel for teams, and racers perhaps not at the level of Grand Prix but in place thanks to the backing of a sponsor or because their nationality or profile fits the bill are some of the side effects.

For all their critics, my view from the inside is that Youthstream are simply trying to run motocross as something that can sustain itself. Perhaps there is a 'vast' amount of profit in there but having seen their investment on a weekly basis I doubt it very much. The ultimate crux of the argument is that if YS cleared out their desks tonight would their replacement be able to make MXGP happen any other way?

European teams might need to evolve and find new ways to gain support

Again I doubt it. There might be minor policy differences here or there but the sport would not (and cannot) shift that dramatically. The alternative school of thought involves a regression that means it simply wouldn't endure and a company like Monster Energy would find another series with promise to sink millions into.

To my original point (!), European teams might have to now consider non-European means of finance. The Grand Prix of Russia showed that a market and interest for the sport exists. What would it cost to contact an agency in Moscow on a commission-based agreement, throw them all the marketing tools the team has (video clips, promo packs etc) and try to secure extra investment? It might come through a company only prepared to chuck 30 grand to reach a young audience but it is 30k more than they might have got from a struggling European source. Apply the same approach to Brazil and Thailand... it means thinking outside the box but it might be necessary in the coming years to ensure survival.





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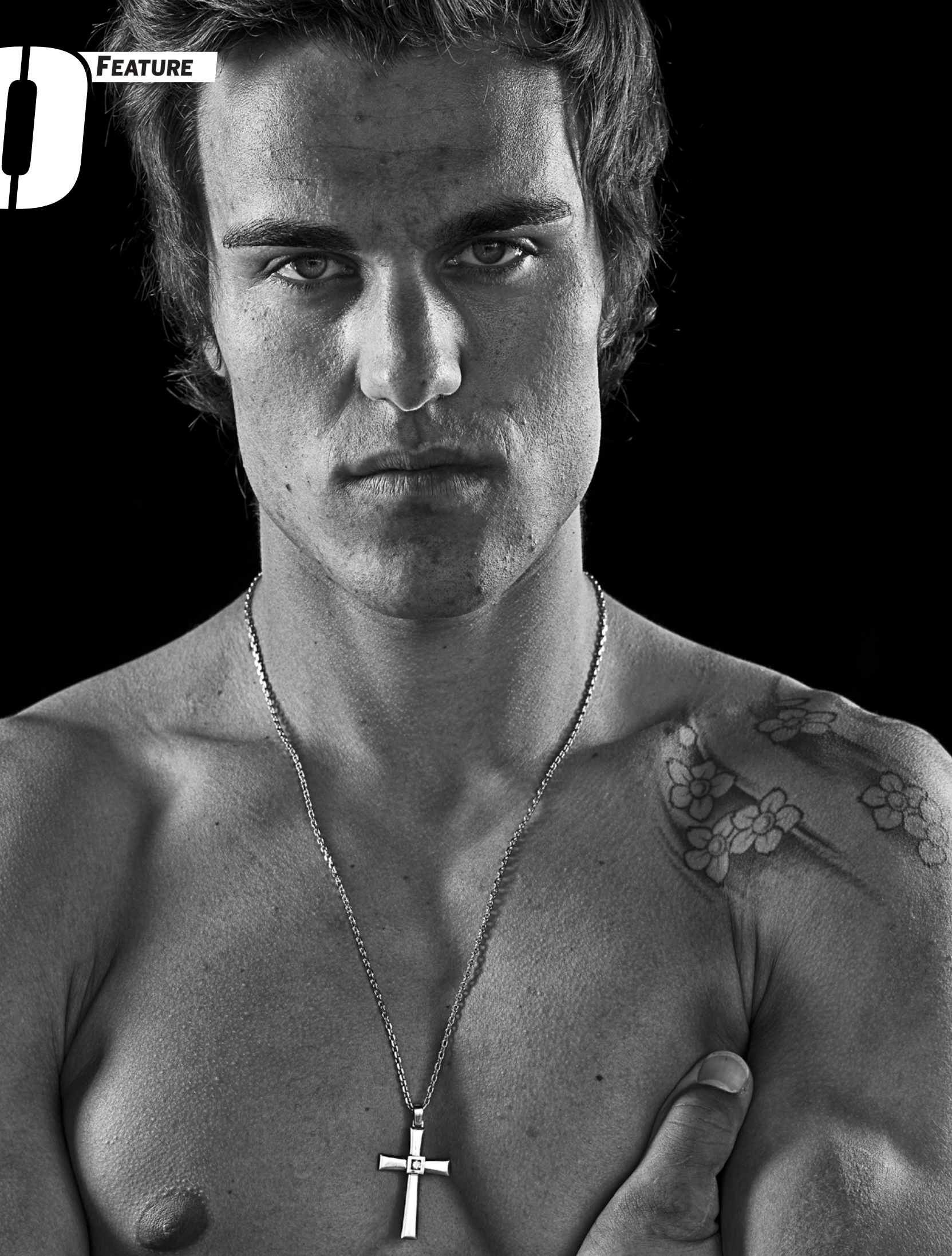
CLASS APART

MX1'S STARLET GAUTIER PAULIN

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer







Yamaha were disappointed to lose him, Monster worked to keep him and Kawasaki are the main beneficiaries from an impressive first rookie season for Gautier Paulin in the premier class of the FIM Motocross World Championship.

The factory rider is a cool guy; a former BMX World Champ who likes his fine watches, classy cars, sushi in Cannes and is rarely seen without stunning blonde girlfriend Clementine on his arm. At twenty-two years of age the Frenchman is an electrifying addition to the MX1 series in 2012 and won the second Grand Prix of the season in Bulgaria (with his wildcard success at the end of 2011 in Italy it meant he had owned two of the three MX1 GPs run up until that point).

Three podiums in total and a campaign that has ebbed (a mid-year quiet spell) and flowed (his last lap Italian GP battles with countryman and nemesis Christophe Pourcel were exhilarating) mean Paulin is bubbling away as one of the most exciting and charismatic characters in a fierce fast cast...



Do you notice much difference being a star in MX1 compared to being a GP winner and peer of the likes of Roczen, Musquin, Frossard, Herlings etc in MX2...?

I feel there is more attention; a little bit from the press but not so different there, more from the sponsors and the people involved. The importance of the rider seems to be elevated. When you win a GP in MX1 it is way different. It is the premier class and people treat it so. I felt it in Fermo in 2011 and it was a very nice achievement but it was also the end of the season and other riders were injured. I know you need to be there, you need to be fit and you need to get a start; nobody will ever 'give' you a win in the world championship but this year there are so many good riders and from the beginning I showed that I was fast enough and strong enough.

Two years ago you were taking good positions in the AMA West Coast Lites Supercross series in some wild-card outings and talking about America. Has that dream faded?

The idea of America is not over but I have grown up a bit and I really like the MX1 category. I have found a good team and I really like the people I am with. I got on with the team I had before but now I think I have found my group; like Tony [Cairolì] did with De Carli. This is what I was looking for and it means my goal is totally on the world championship and doing something good here. My life is in France at the moment and everything is really good. When you go to America you just need to pack a bag and go for it. There are two championships and it is full-on. It is completely different. Adapting to the food, weather and the fact that you are on your own. I know some French riders over there who even come back to France when they have an injury problem. Here you can make a programme, test and get ready for a campaign.





You're a man that likes the finer things...

Yes, but it is not all bling bling, beach and a jetset life. I like the lifestyle I have now but I'm not wrapped up in the material things. I have my house and a private track and the whole set-up around me for my career and my job it's working. As a sportsman when you build something and you sense that it is helping you to get better and better...well, it feels like you cannot buy that sensation of trust in people and confidence in myself.

It seems like 'a group' is important to you...

Yeah...you know, my dad never told me I was doing well. If I won a race he'd say 'that was a good one' but otherwise nothing and not so long ago, up until 2010 I think, I was never happy. I had to be going 1-1. If I was 1-2 then I was happy with the job I'd done, but not with the race. I started to mature and realised it is not easy to be the best every week. Before I always wanted something more to get ahead but now when I ride I enjoy myself because I do realise I am doing something that not many people can and perhaps many people would like to. To be 22 years old, to have a house, to be able to put a bike in the back of a van and go training for my job...it is a great lifestyle and Clementine keeps reminding me I should be happy. I've learnt to slow down a little bit and I'll see a video of a race and think 'what I'm doing, that's nice'. As a sportsman you really need to believe in yourself. That doesn't mean you need to have a big head. You need to see and set yourself goals, especially when it is in the middle of winter and you are by yourself.

So as the first pro sportsman in the family maybe you'll set an example for the next Paulin generation...

Yes but if I am here today and I have achieved what I have so far then it's because my Dad's approach was not so bad. I like to would to think that I'd encourage my kids but then I can

also see myself being like my Dad and saying nothing. When I was riding motocross or BMX he never said anything. Even at the race he wouldn't show me the pitboard! I also never missed a day of school...even if I was sick.

Isn't that a bit hard?

Maybe it is but it made me very strong mentally. I knew as a junior coming up the ranks that I could make it to the top. My Dad wouldn't have a problem telling me I was doing something wrong or he said if I wanted to stop then we could pack everything up! I knew the bike and fuel he bought cost money and it became more than just fun and it got to a point when I was determined this would be my life. With my kids I wouldn't want to say too much and just let them see how good they can be at some activity. If they needed help then I would give it for sure but I don't want to be a Dad that pushes.





“When I was in MX2 I had to watch my weight. Now it is a bit different for sure; I’m on the scales a lot less! It doesn’t really matter what you are like as long as you are fit and physically ready to be able to do the job on the 450.”



How important was BMX in making you the rider that you are today?

Difficult to answer but I think BMX played a part. When I see some GP videos now the others are standing on the bike and I am sitting! And vice versa. I seem to be doing the opposite sometimes. I was really fast through the waves section this year at St Jean and I think a technical skill like this owes a lot to BMX. As an athlete you train and develop. I am a professional motocross rider and have been for a while and I think I would have reached this point anyway. I would have some technique but maybe not the same. I would have developed differently.

What lessons have you gleaned as part of MX1?

I have experience now but you always learn. I'm not a rider who thinks 'I can be third today but I'll accept fifth because it's good for the championship'. If I can be third then that's what I want. I think I have an aggressive style because I move so much and hard on the bike – and that's because of the BMX – but I am also smooth with my lines. I don't crash so much. I think I am consistent. Experience doesn't mean you will come back and do better the next season. I am not always getting the best start and that could be better and I need to learn a bit more about the riders I am up against.

You are known as a friendly guy but you've tangled with Christophe Pourcel this year.

How do you feel about confrontation?

In France I was three seconds a lap quicker than him at one point. I don't need to be losing time behind a rider; I don't care if his name

is Christophe Pourcel. He had the wrong line. I passed Clement Desalle and Xavier Boog in the same spot. I think the move was correct. I broke nothing on his bike and there were no tyre marks on his boots. I think he doesn't like the fact that he's not the superstar anymore. When the game starts to be hard then that's when the hard gamers start to play. Pourcel is consistent but not the fastest. If he has to make a fight of it then this is something that will always give me more strength. I'm not someone who bears grudges or who has enemies. All the journalists and teams know me. If I have to pass a rider then I will, regardless of the name on the back of the jersey.

It was pretty gripping for the sport at one stage and must have boosted MX's profile in France a bit more...

If I was watching on TV then I'd think it's great but in the same way it is not something really bad. Nobody is on the ground. For sure any battles are going to make the racing more interesting; the last thing you want to see is a rider alone at the front riding for 35 minutes and waiting for him to make a mistake. I would prefer to race like this, although maybe not to the extent that we saw in America with Wilson and Tomac going too far. I can understand that style of riding because if someone blocks passes you then you want to give it back. I go crazy under the helmet if someone does that to me.





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FEATURE

STARS N' STRIPES

A LOOK AT AMA MOTOCROSS WITH THE BOSS...

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Hoppenworld.com/Simon Cudby



“We have three very big series going on right now: World Supercross, Grand Prix and the U.S. Nationals...plus the Motocross of Nations,” so speaks MX Sports CEO and RacerX Editor Davey Coombs the man who pulls the strings and flicks the switches not only behind the biggest and fastest national off-road racing championship in the world (with major international appeal) but also a seminal monthly magazine and one of the most-viewed websites in the sport www.racerxonline.com.

The FIM Motocross World Championship features heavily in OTOR, we chatted to Carmelo Ezpeleta about MotoGP and obtained the view of Feld Motorsport's Dave Prater on the AMA Supercross campaign in a previous edition of the mag. Now its time to get a little under the skin of the Lucas Oil AMA Pro Motocross Championship and some of the themes and issues from arguably the sport's most influential scene...



On the packed calendar...17 SX and 12 MX races plus a Motocross of Nations for three riders and the fast emerging SX-MX hybrid the Monster Energy Cup means 30 weekends of action across a broad spread of the USA and Canada for most top flight AMA racers. Add a training period and a testing schedule for both SX and MX and it stacks a relentless year. The demands were addressed in 2009 as the motocross series switched to a one-day Saturday programme.

DC: The schedule has evolved over a long period. While some participants might wish to see a few less events, there are fans in markets where we don't have races that feel what we need are more events.

I think we have a good balance of SX and MX and I think that the current number of races does a good job in showcasing the sport. We have a long and respectful relationship with Feld Motorsports. No company does more to promote our sport than the Supercross folks and we try to work closely with them, keeping the harmony between our series' by working together on rules, cross-promotions and shared responsibilities like the Asterisk Mobile Medics Unit. However, outdoor motocross and stadium events are very different entertainment products. We'll never deliver the kind of spectator numbers that Feld does, but they serve as a motivating force for us to always work hard to maintain the quality of our product. I learn a great deal from friends at Feld like Charlie Mancuso, Todd Jendro and Dave Prater every time I attend one of their supercross events.

We've made huge strides in just three and a half years to get American Motocross to what it is, and while some of the changes were considered quite controversial at the time (convincing an entire industry based on the film 'On Any Sunday' that racing on Saturdays was a better idea was no easy task) I think the results speak for themselves. I believe the athletes and the teams trust MX Sports to roll out new ideas

Noise control STEWART

that have a benefit to all, whether it's a way to bring the cost of racing down or for them or to expand their exposure.

We will continue to upgrade our facilities while also not straying too far from the grassroots of motocross in America, which means incredible, pure motocross tracks like Unadilla, RedBud, Washougal, Mt. Morris, Budds Creek and more.

American GP



RacerX

Injuries

RED BULL

NATIONS

Southern States

Asterisk

Lucas Oils

SUPERXCROSS

KTM

Calendar

Rule book

One or two days



FEATURE

AMA MX DAVEY COOMBS



On how the Pro Motocross Championship can progress...

In the case of a geographical spread I do think we need to provide a bit of growth into some parts of the country where we haven't been in the past. We're always looking for possible venues that might provide a better geographical balance for the series, but the challenge is to find venues that will make the series better, not just different. The U.S. is a country of 330 million people so there will always be some disparity in reaching every market with a 12-race series but we're always looking for locations that will enhance the presentation of our sport. The reality is that with only 12 events and 12 markets, the majority of folks in the U.S. get their pro motocross experience from our television broadcasts on NBC, NBC Sports Network and Fuel TV, as well as the live and free streaming on www.allisports.com. We strive every week to present the very best events that we can produce, but we remind our staff every week that we can always improve on the way in which we conduct each event.

It's the same approach I take in the magazine business, and something my dad and mom taught me well: everything you do, you must do it better the next time.

Anything else...?

I do wish there was something we could all do about injuries, particularly with our 450 riders. We've taken concussion testing and monitoring (ImPACT tests are now mandatory for every athlete) and made them a priority, as well as advancing the involvement and our support of the Asterisk Mobile Medics Unit. But guys are still getting hurt, both on our shores and in Europe, and we all need to work together on some common-sense ideas and solutions to keep our guys (and girls) healthy. Motocross is a dangerous sport - that will never change - but it's also an evolving sport that can become safer with smart ideas.



On how the series is handling the economical landscape...

Contrary to the doom-and-gloom I've read on some sites across the pond, the U.S. market for both Supercross and Motocross has done well despite a very challenging economic situation for the motorcycle industry. The people at Feld Motorsports have been doing this for a very long time and they have a very highly skilled group of people who have been through recessionary periods before, so it's not surprising that they have been able to continue to grow even during these difficult economic times. For pro motocross, we're a bit newer to this type of challenge, but through the efforts of all of the series promoters and our promotional partners, I feel that we've been very fortunate to continue to grow even though the domestic economy has been slow in rebounding to the level that we saw prior to the fall of 2008.

On the endless debates concerning the merits and comparative standing of the AMA and FIM MX championships...

Racing motorcycles, whether in the U.S. or in countries around the world, is an activity that is always a topic of comparison for fans and we believe that the comparison and related dialogue among our fans is good for both the Lucas Oil Pro Motocross Championship as well as the FIM World Motocross Championship. I think that's what makes the Motocross of Nations such a wonderful event—it's an annual chance to 'settle the score'...though the size of the U.S. and our industry gives our team an obvious advantage. If Youthstream and MX Sports could ever get together four years or maybe semi-annually for a Ryder Cup-type or Match Race – you know, Europe as a team, North America as another, and then the Southern Hemisphere, 12 riders each – that would compliment the MXoN we now have. We could call it the Roger De Coster Cup!





FEATURE

AMA MX DAVEY COOMBS





On whether the USA will be able to welcome the flagship Motocross of Nations again after editions in 2007 and 2010...

It's always flattering for any nation to have the opportunity to host this event, and we're proud in America to host the event from time to time, but this is a big planet with many emerging economies and I expect that we'll see MXoN in places that we probably wouldn't have expected a decade ago. The biggest challenge is to find the best venue that showcases the sport in our country while recognizing that the addition of another event is a test for our industry.

American fans would probably like to see MXoN in the U.S. every year, but even with a strong foundational base on which to host the event I believe that it's probably in the best interests of the sport to visit the U.S. every few years. I'm not sure when it's coming back, but I have a few ideas of where it can be held to make it easy-access for fans coming over from Europe and the rest of the world, and also a great race track for the competition.

But in the meantime, I love traveling to Europe each year to support Team USA and all of the riders who choose to spend time racing here. Aside from Loretta Lynn's, it's still my favourite race of all.

DC...

Coombs has positioned himself as an overseer in American motocross thanks to his family's rich history in their promotion and publicity efforts and as a former racer himself (best finish was a ninth in the 1985 Daytona 125 Supercross). The 46 year old father of two was recently ranked the second most influential figure in the sport, according to British monthly magazine 'Moto'. "It's always flattering to be placed along with other folks who have done so much to contribute to the overall success of a sport and business. I suspect that I'm ranked a bit higher than I deserve—I am the sum of my parts, which are a bunch of good friends, family and great people—but I'm honoured to be included. And that's as close as I will ever get to Stefan Everts on any list!"

For four years he has been at the top of the organization that salvaged, re-shaped and repackaged AMA motocross. "MX Sports is a family business so I am only one part of the management structure, and along with my sister Carrie

Coombs-Russell, we serve as the directors who delegate a lot of work to a great staff of people. But I still love to roll up my sleeves and get out there and help, whether that means working on the track, pounding in stakes or sorting through issues that come up in the paddock or out on the racetrack. I just like being out there helping."

For the few quiet moments of a calendar year when Coombs is not addressing matters connected with the Nationals he still has the itch to be creative through a keyboard. "I'll always find time to contribute my opinions. Motocross is a very dynamic sport that is always evolving with changes in technology and with the inherent challenges that come from being in the live sports entertainment business. After a very humbling few years as a competitor, I started my real career as a journalist and I suppose I will end that way too. But there are still many, many races to be run and stories to be told, so I guess I am in both for the long haul."



TREY BACK ON THE BIKE

In some ways, it seems like forever that Trey Canard came out and won three AMA Supercross events amidst one of the most stacked fields in the history of the sport, but it was just 2011.

The 2010 250cc National MX Champ had a heck of a time after he got hurt near the end of the 2011 AMA Supercross Championship, while testing outdoors, and just when he got healthy again, he was injured once more, racing one AMA Supercross round (Phoenix) before taking another painful (and frankly unbelievable) trip to the hospital in Los Angeles the following week.

Ever since, he's been busy doing missionary work, and healing. Mainly healing, though. Well, while his 2012 season has been pretty much written-off, Honda had enough faith in him to sign him up for two more years, and recently he started riding again.

He's not planning on racing in 2012, but if things go well, I wouldn't count him out of the Monster Energy Cup in Vegas on October 20th.





LORETTA'S STILL STRONG

The two week gap in the Lucas Oil AMA Pro National Motocross Championship calendar allowed a brief respite for the riders and teams and while a decent majority used the break to heal up and catch their breath the cream of American amateurs and juniors flocked to the annual amateur extravaganza that is Loretta Lynn's.

Tennessee was again buzzing with all manner of machinery and shiny potential and carried some heavy star power with Ricky Carmichael making a first race appearance in five years (RC is still only 32) in the 25+ category. Loretta's has picked up enormous profile within the industry for a number of years now and the size of the gathering and informal atmosphere to what is otherwise a crucial meeting for many of participants along with heavy promotion (even NBC television coverage) ensures that it is an important window. Ryan Villopoto and Blake Baggett completed parade laps to show off Kawasaki's new 2013 range and Team Green were expectedly out in force and picked up seventeen podium results alone on the second day with the likes of Adam Cianciarulo.

Our friends www.vurbmoto.com published a rack of photos and videos. Click on the button to see the stuff

SILLY SEASON ROLLS ON

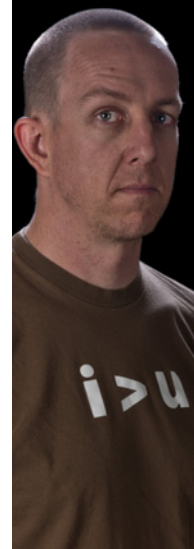
Joining Canard on Team Honda will be former Factory Connection team-mate Justin Barcia, for sure. In theory, Honda can have three racers, and it might be smart for them to do so, with how often the team and brand has needed replacement racers in the last few years. If Honda requires a third guy, they may keep Justin Brayton. Another racer moving up from the 250cc ranks is 2011 250cc National Champ Dean Wilson.

It looks like Wilson will be staying on Kawasakis on Jeff Ward's team, using factory equipment. However, that deal isn't done yet. If this thing with Villopoto falls through, my bet is that Wilson lands on the TwoTwo Racing squad with Reed for 2013. Although Kawasaki would love to keep him, Wilson and Reed get along really well.



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RV COLOUR BLINDED??

By Steve Cox

The first I heard of the 'Ryan Villopoto to TwoTwo Motorsports' rumour was at Washougal a few weeks ago.

The gossip was that Villopoto – freshly back on the bike after a long hiatus due to the injury suffered at the Seattle Supercross – had taken delivery of a factory Honda to try out at home. At the time, most assumed that meant that the Honda factory team was looking to hire the reigning outdoor and current supercross champ. But it turned out that wasn't necessarily the case.

Since that rumour first hit, a press release from Honda announcing that Trey Canard would be with the team through 2014 buzzed along the wires, and normally Honda isn't the kind of crew that hires two top-tier guys at the same time. But Chad Reed has also since confirmed the speculation; at least to the extent that he intends or wants to hire Villopoto to race for his team.

On the Australian Fox Sports website, Reed was quoted as saying: "Ryan's contract is up and we're talking to him. We really want to try and make it happen. He's a great kid and we've been teammate before... That was an unsuccessful run for both of us that year but we can make a good run for it and we can make it work. We'll see what happens, at this point it can go in any direction so we just hope that we're in the fight."

Villopoto is rumoured to be looking for more money in 2013 and beyond, and considering he has won everything there is to win when he has been healthy to compete for the last couple of years, he may be onto something.

However, there is only so much money available for one guy. Also, the rumour a year or two ago was that he signed as much as a five-year deal to run the green and black of Monster Energy, which is what has helped supplement his deal with Kawasaki. It's unclear whether this contract would still apply if he wasn't at Kawasaki, or if it would work for him as a personal sponsor on another team, but if it is still in place, it definitely limits his options to teams that don't have beverage sponsors already.

TwoTwo Motorsports could be Villopoto's only other option...

Honda, as of now, still has Muscle Milk. KTM has Red Bull, of course. Suzuki doesn't have a beverage sponsor, but they do have James Stewart already. And Yamaha doesn't have a factory effort anyway. It could be that TwoTwo Motorsports is Villopoto's only other option besides staying at Monster Energy Kawasaki.

In addition, chances are pretty good that Kawasaki has some sort of 'first right of refusal' in Villopoto's contract, and considering that Kawasaki has already re-signed RV's training partner and current teammate Jake Weimer, my bet is he'll still be at Kawasaki in 2013 and beyond.

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STARRY-EYED 'CROSSER

BRADLEY SMITH ON HIS MX VICE...

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer/Milagro

Bradley Smith is Tech3 Yamaha MotoGP bound in 2013, which places him in the extremely narrow bracket of being one of the UK's elite motorcycle racers.

The 21 year old former 125 ace is now in the midst of the Grand Prix bedlam that is Moto2 but admits his first love is still the dirt.

OTOR caught up with the Oxford resident when the Ricky Carmichael University hit Great Britain and here's what the CRF250R Honda rider had to say...



On his dirty little secret...

I'm not 'supposed' to be but I'm still a motocrosser through-and-through. I try and ride once - and if I'm lucky - twice a week at my own track, although it is not like the sand we have to deal with today [at FatCat in Doncaster for the RCU]. I'm carrying two bikes in the van so you can see that I'm a pretty keen! I just keep it quiet and try not to shout about it too much. My mechanics came to my place before the British Grand Prix and took a load of video clips so I'm sure it'll all be out anyway soon. I was brought up on this. Cut me open and there's motocross in me. I don't think it is something you can lose. I think the team understand that and they let me do it. I train hard and use the privacy of my own track rather than going to public ones and risking some competitive battles. It seems to work for me.

On his dirt-bike of choice...

I'm a four-stroke guy and I like the 250. With a 450 I just don't feel that I can push as hard and prefer to use the bigger bike for supermoto. The 250 works better for me on the hard-pack but I could appreciate using the 450 in the sand. I think the 250 is more like a Moto2 bike for me; you can throw it around and be aggressive with it.







“In Moto2 the bike is twice the weight and you have to sling it around and really work it, back-it into the corner and spin it up on the exits. It is all stuff that motocross helps you with.”





On following the racing...

I'm more of an AMA Supercross fan. I raced against a few of the guys doing GPs and I pay good attention because some of them are friends – I'm a big fan of Tommy Searle – there is also a strong link with Monster Energy and Yamaha in GPs. I go to California for riding and training in the winter and the Supercross is pretty special and I manage to see at least two meetings a year.

On the practical side to riding off-road...

There is nothing that comes close to riding a motorcycle. Motocross is definitely different, but learning to have great throttle control - especially on hard pack tracks - learning to muscle the bike around using your legs and hips is all stuff we do on a road race bike except that it looks neat and tidy instead of it sliding around all over the place. We don't get to practice, test or race that often so this is the next best thing. Your heart-rate is always high and it gives a full body workout. Doing motocross is not going to help me get another second on the road race track but I believe it helps me keep my focus, keep sharp hand-eye co-ordination and just provides the familiarity of feeling the bike sliding around. I think some mastery of rainy conditions can all come from motocross.

On the role MX played for the hustle and bustle of Moto2...

When I was on 125 GP bikes, motocross didn't have much relevance but I developed an aggressive style for Moto2 and that came a bit from throwing a motocross bike around. With a 125 you almost had to 'tip toe' and riding it was almost something very elegant and graceful. In Moto2 the bike is twice the weight and you have to sling it around and really work it, back-it into the corner and spin it up on the exits. It is all stuff that motocross helps you with.





MotoGP

RED BULL U.S. GRAND PRIX

LAGUNA SECA • JULY 29th • RND 10 of 18

MotoGP winner: Casey Stoner, Honda



STONER TRIPLER LAGUNA SECA

Photos by Honda Pro images, www.yamahamotogp.com, Ducati Corse, Milagro



PLAY

Casey Stoner's brilliance at Laguna Seca continued with a third victory and fifth podium from the last six years at the short, curling and undulating Californian circuit.

The Australian's choice of a soft Bridgestone rear tyre helped him slash tenths away from Jorge Lorenzo's 21 of 32 laps lead and the extra stickiness of the rubber was partially key in the overtaking move exiting the final turn eleven.

Stoner's fresh first step on the path to reduce the 32 point deficit in the championship chase was one of the headlines at a Grand Prix that saw the furore over Valentino Rossi's future gain intensity and Ben Spies' remarkable self-administered news that the Texan will exit the premier class at the end of the season. The Yamaha rider suffered a swing arm problem that saw him dumped to the ground negotiating the corkscrew and the tumble could be symbolic of the state of affairs with which the American lies in 'blue'. A heavily mooted return to World Superbike would be a major shot in the arm for the series.

MotoGP breaks for another two weeks before moving across the U.S and to Indianapolis where the 1000s will be joined again by Moto2 and Moto3.



Spies enlivened the MotoGP silly season. Was it apt or ironic that his M1 let him down during his home Grand Prix? The former WSB champion could attempt to win the series for a second time with BMW or even retire to establish his own cycling team...that's how wild the rumours became





PLAY



Laguna Seca 2012 was not a classic but it further enforced the view that there is very little between Lorenzo and Stoner this season. Pedrosa kept adrift in third but when the Australian and Spaniard are hitting times and perfection like this then the only difference will be a bit of rubber

One of the final straws? Rossi crashes out with only his patience and thoughts sustaining any kind of damage. The Italian has more than enough experience to deal with the clamour over his ideas for the future but there is little doubt - recent Yamaha Motor Europe Amsterdam office sighting or not - that most of the road racing world is waiting to see what he will do



Nicky Hayden stays red for '13 and for scenes like this brings more than just professionalism and diligence to the factory effort



Dovizioso's next move will be interesting to chart. Previously a Honda stalwart the Italian is having a good first year with Yamaha but it is unlikely to lead to a factory saddle with another Italian in the way





The UK has still to celebrate a podium finish in MotoGP since the turn of the century and it seems strange to think of a British rider as hot property in the premier class. Crutchlow takes a different route at Laguna and it remains to be seen where his path lies for the future





DUCATI PLAN B IN ACTION

If indeed it is true that Ducati have offered Valentino Rossi 17 million euros to stay on for another season it is as much a sign of his commercial worth to their brand as it is an attempt to retain his services as one of the best four riders currently on the grid.

If one thing has become clear over the past two years it is that Rossi is never going to adapt his style to the Desmosedici so it is good to see Ducati at least putting Plan B into action this week with a behind-closed-doors test at Mugello for young Moto2 stars Scott Redding and Andrea Iannone.

Whilst Rossi's most likely replacement for 2013 would be Cal Crutchlow the theory that a fresh approach and a lack of MotoGP experience would be an advantage in terms of taming the Italian factory's fickle bike means that long term their best bet is to blood new talent.

The most exciting prospect in the intermediate category is probably Marc Marquez but Redding has shown the raw speed to run with the HRC-bound Spaniard despite a huge weight disadvantage.

At 184cm (over six foot) Redding believes the MotoGP bike "suits him more" after running the latest version of the Desmosedici GP12 development bike in the high 1'49s (Rossi's best race lap was a 1'48.4) on hard tyres.

"It was hard but fun and definitely more than I expected," Redding reflected. "It's the first time I've ridden anything bigger than a Moto2 so it definitely took a toll on the body, more than I expected, but in the end I enjoyed it. I made my target lap time and I felt comfortable. I think it's the direction I need to go in."

Iannone tested the bike on Thursday, also setting times around the 1'50 mark, and Ducati team manager Vitto Guareschi has confirmed the possibility of both riders riding in a 'Junior Team' satellite outfit with factory support from 2013.





RED BULL MotoGP ROOKIE CUP OPENS DOORS FOR 2013

The most direct and exciting route to MotoGP is undoubtedly the Red Bull MotoGP Rookie Cup and the junior feeder series has gained even more relevance thanks to increased KTM support and provision of four-stroke 250 RBR engines that pull the contest directly into line with the kind of performance and technology found in the new Moto3 class this year.

The backing of companies like the Austrian firms, Dorna, Ipone and Alpinestars means the Cup retains a high profile and is the best possible window for aspiring talent with names like Zarco, Kent, Kornfeil and Salom to make the breakthrough and begin a career.

The competition for 2013 is now open for potential candidates. Racers (with a CV boasting some experience of 'high performance riding') hopeful of a berth for next season need to have been born between January 1st 1996 and March 31st 2000 and submit their application to pass the first phase. If successful they will attend a selection event later this year where the final group will make the cut for the '13 calendar (eight events run alongside MotoGP meetings in 2012).

For more information look here:

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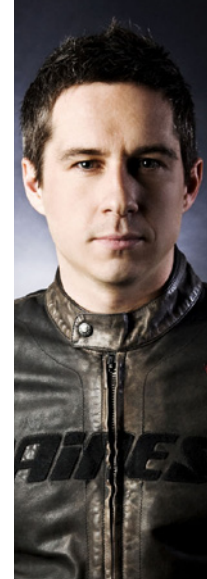


19TH AUGUST WEEKEND
GRAND PRIX OF GREAT BRITAIN



THE ROSSI DILEMMA...

By Matthew Roberts



So, should he stay or should he go?

A quick straw poll amongst my followers on Twitter was unanimous: Valentino Rossi should leave Ducati for Yamaha and finish his career on a competitive package that will allow him to challenge for the title once more.

The remarkable thing for me is not that the majority feel that Rossi needs to return to the Japanese factory, because I agree it is a logical move, but their rose-tinted reasons as to why.

There can be no doubt that his two-year dream move to Ducati has turned into a nightmare and it can be looked upon as nothing but a failure from all parties. But the notion that Valentino is blameless for his role in this colossal underachievement is skewed.

Riding the bike Casey took to 10 podiums in '10 Rossi managed just 1...

Trailing Nicky Hayden in the current championship, there has been little to separate the pair in terms of pace over the past two seasons and Rossi has rarely qualified as the top Ducati. Indeed, at his home Grand Prix at Mugello last month he was tenth on the grid with satellite Desmosedici rider Héctor Barberá on the front row in third and Hayden in fourth.

Last season, riding the very bike that Casey Stoner had scored ten podiums on in 2010, he managed just one.

Rossi is still a top class rider, one of only a handful capable of winning races at this level, and his place amongst the all-time legends of this sport is secure. However, we should not forget that he was allowed to leave Yamaha because Jorge Lorenzo was faster than him.

Two years on and Lorenzo has improved still further, the YZR-M1 has been developed around him and Rossi, of course, is two years closer to retirement age. No wonder Jorge is happy to bury the hatchet and welcome him back.

Nobody knows this better than Rossi himself, whose only hope of winning the World Championship for an incredible eighth time disappeared the moment he backed a horse that has proved too wild for him to tame.

Returning to the boys in blue is not his attempt at claiming back his status as the world's number one rider but of restoring self pride and you can't put a price on that. Not even 17 million, apparently.

Valentino has revealed that there is one other option on the table but that it's not a factory bike, so we can safely assume it's with Fausto Gresini's struggling team.

If it is podiums, the odd win and an enjoyable final couple of years he is after then riding a high-spec satellite Honda in an Italian team with Italian sponsors might not be such a bad option. Like all Rossi's admirers, I want to see him at retire at the top. I just fear that spending a season getting his butt kicked by Lorenzo on the same bike might not be the way to do it.

This could be his biggest gamble yet.



LEATT



The years, expense and extent to which Leatt have created their market-leading brace technology means that any other products emanating from the South African firm are bound to have the same kind of due diligence to quality and the practical use.

OTOR hasn't tried it yet but the **Coolit** Tee and Vest claim to reduce body temperature by 15-20 degrees thanks to Hyperkewl material and moisture-wicking fabric. You can soak the garments in water and utilize up to 300% more evaporative cooling fabric coverage than others.

The capabilities are ideal for riders and sportsmen in hot territories (fighting heat-stroke) and there is a strong 'before and after' angle to the items, perhaps reducing the need to sit in an ice-bath for athletes!





ONE INDUSTRIES

Anyone who has gotten close to the factory Honda World Motocross team this season can see the quality of both the racewear and casualwear that One Industries add to arguably the GP paddock's most evolving and pioneering racing effort.

The Californian company are no engineering slouches themselves when it comes to the weave, and their brand new **Vapor** line (in blue on this page) is a development from the **Defcon** range (Phantom on the adjacent page) seen around the Grand Prix and Supercross tracks by the pros. Vapor kit stresses lightness, resistance and air flow. The pants use 'Uber lightweight 4Way stretch' material.

The ergonomically crafted **Armada** glove is the other item on these pages. Importantly – at least in our view – One Industries products are really hitting the mark when it comes to colours and design





TISSOT

If you follow top flight motorcycle road racing then you cannot escape Swiss company Tissot, who are the official timekeepers for both MotoGP and World Superbike.

The MotoGP association now spans more than a decade and after twelve years of partnership and themed timepieces the **Tissot T-Race MotoGP C01.211 2012 limited edition** watch is this years showcase product from the engineers at La Locle.

The auto chronograph C01.211 comes with carbon composites, scratch resistance sapphire crystal, 100m water resistance, MotoGP branding and a cool presentation box. Just 2012 units have been created.







TRIUMPH TROPHY

110 years of manufacture and some fantastic engineering achievements sit nicely alongside Triumph's position as a cult brand of motorcycling.

Over the last decade the British marque has evolved through some superbly functional and exciting motorcycling products that have done justice to the name. The Speed Triple and Daytona have raised pulses while revised Bonneville and Scrambler models have found popular places in the market. Triumph's evolving diversity means a tourer like the **Trophy** has to be taken seriously if it shares the performance and potential found in other corners of their product line-up.

The power from a three cylinder 1215cc shaft driven engine is complimented by a raft of technology that you'd expect from a high-class tourer: traction control, electronic suspension, ride by wire, ABS and features such as cruise control, Bluetooth audio system, electric screen and a dynamic luggage system.

First launch buzz will be happening at the beginning of September while the bike itself – with an SE version also available – will be in dealers by October.





YAMAHA GP RACING FACTORY TEAM WEAR

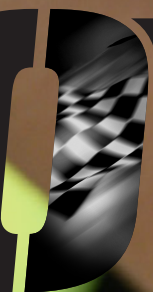


Fresh after winning a Dutch Corporate Fashion Award last April (for innovative use of environmentally friendly fabric) it seems Yamaha is gaining acclaim for their fashion and casualwear as much for engineering prowess.

The iconic 50th anniversary MotoGP collection allowed race fans to adopt the famous red and white speed block colours in 2011 and now a series of photos involving many of the MotoGP crew and the familiar blue and white hue have been released.

Caps, shirts, tees, sweats and jackets constitute the bulk of the line-up and are easily viewed from the Yamaha Motor Europe website





BACKPAGE

2012 Monster Energy girls
By Milagro







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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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